2004-05, including additional allocations made during that year. Allocations for 2007-08 have also been maintained at the same level.

In view of requests received from various State Governments including Maharashtra for increasing the SKO allocation, the Government of India commissioned the detailed study of Kerosene demand in the country, through the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in December 2004. NCAER submitted its report in October 2005. NCAER has *inter alia* recommended to restrict the subsidy on kerosene to BPL families only.

Further, in order to formulate a long-term pricing policy, the Government had constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. C. Rangarajan, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister to examine different aspects of pricing and taxation of petroleum products with a view to stabilizing/rationalizing their prices. The Committee submitted its report on 17.2.2006. The Committee has also *inter alia* recommended to restrict the subsidy on kerosene to BPL families only. The Government has accepted the recommendations of Dr. Rangarajan Committee Report and has decided 'in principle' that subsidy on PDS kerosene be limited to BPL families only. The proposal to work out the modalities to implement this decision and for rationalizing the allocation of PDS kerosene among States/UTs is under the consideration of the Government.

Approval of Gujarat Motor Vehicles (Use of Fuel) Regulation Bill

1197. SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL:
SHRI SURENDRA MOTILAL PATEL:
SHRI JAYANTILAL BAROT:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Government of Gujarat submitted the Gujarat Motor Vehicles (Use of Fuel) Regulation Bill to the Central Government for approval in February, 2005;

(b) whether it is still lying pending with the Central Government; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) The Gujarat Motor Vehicles (Use of Fuel) Regulation Bill, 2005, for seeking the approval of the Government of India before its introduction in the State Legislature, was received by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on 17th Feb. 2005. It has been informed by MHA that the State Legislations are examined from three angles viz. (i) repugnancy with Central Laws (ii) deviation from National or Central Policy and (iii) legal and constitutional validity. In the case of the Gujarat Motor Vehicles (Use of Fuel) Regulation Bill, 2005 there are policy issues, which need to be sorted out and no time-frame can be fixed for achieving the same.

Mining of gas hydrates

1198. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has around 2000 trillion cubic feet of prognostic reserves

of gas hydrates off the country's east coast in Krishna Godavari, North East Coast, Mahanadi and Anadaman basins;

(b) whether it is also a fact that if mined and brought to atmospheric conditions, they produce 160 times their volume of methane but the technology to mine these hydrates is in its infancy; and

(c) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to adopt latest technology to mine these hydrates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Prognosticated resource of gas hydrates was estimated at 1894 Trillion Cubic Metre (TCM) based on Bottom Simulating Reflector as seen on seismic line. Under National Gas Hydrate Programme (NGHP), drilling and coring of gas hydrates was carried out in KG basin, Mahanadi basin and Andaman basin.

It is estimated that one cubic metre of gas hydrates may yield about 164 cubic metre of gas at atmospheric condition.

At present there is no technology available in world for commercial production of gas from gas hydrates. Scientific studies are going on to explore the possibility of developing gas hydrates production technique.

Delay in allotment of LPG agencies and petrol pumps

1199. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of LPG agencies and petrol pumps allotted to women and candidates belonging to SC on the basis of reservation during 2001 to December 2007, State-wise and company-wise;

(b) the details of cases when candidates are selected, letters of Intent given, but further no actions are taken, State-wise; and

(c) the reasons for these delays?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that during the year 2001 to December, 2007, they have allotted 4084 Petrol Pumps (ROs) and 933 LPG distributorships to women candidates. Further, 2642 ROs and 737 LPG distributorships have been allotted to SC candidates in the country.

The State-wise details are available with the Directors (Marketing) of the OMCs concerned.

(b) and (c) OMCs have also reported that during the period 2001 to December 2007, 4004 and 92 Letters of Intent (LOI) for ROs & LPG distributorships respectively are pending for commissioning in the country due to various reasons such as non-availability of land; construction of godown, court cases/complaints, statutory clearances from various authorities, etc.

The State-wise details are available with the Directors (Marketing) of the OMCs concerned.